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DEPT FOR EUR/NCE - AARON JENSEN AND DAVID KOSTELANCIK

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [EU](#) [MD](#) [RO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH ROMANIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER UNGUREANU

Classified By: Ambassador Nicholas F. Taubman for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: At a year-end meeting with the Ambassador, Romanian FM Ungureanu said Romania hoped to promote an informal "gymnich"-type event as a follow-up to this year's Black Sea Forum. He evinced hope that the three upcoming EU Presidencies of Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia would continue to put a focus on Black Sea issues for the next 18 months. Ungureanu also expressed appreciation for USG support for Romania's bid to host the 2008 NATO Summit, noting that the preponderance of issues facing NATO--enlargement, the Black Sea, Western Balkans, and energy security--all argued for the Romanian venue. Ungureanu was less forthcoming on Kosovo, arguing that Romania would stick to its position regarding the territorial integrity of Serbia and the inviolability of borders. He added, however, that Romania would not threaten EU solidarity on the issue and would ultimately vote with the EU majority. A reference to apparent growing frictions in Romanian-Moldovan relations provoked a testy reply from Ungureanu, who argued at length that "the problem is with Chisinau, not here." (Note: Message reporting Ambassador's meeting with President Basescu--covering a similar range of issues--will be reported Septel) End Summary.

Black Sea Matters

¶2. (C) Ambassador accompanied by DCM and Polcouns met 12/19 with Foreign Minister Ungureanu. He prefaced the meeting by congratulating Romanian authorities on joining the European Union. Ungureanu responded by expressing appreciation for USG support in advancing Romania's candidacy. On Black Sea issues, Ambassador underscored that the Black Sea Forum had succeeded in heightening awareness of Black Sea issues not just within the region but in Washington as well. When queried about next steps, Ungureanu said he envisioned an informal "gymnich" event as a follow-on, noting that he had launched "lots of hints" in Ankara's direction but Turkey had yet to step up to the plate. Ungureanu said that Romania was very interested in helping Turkey meet the requirements for EU entry, adding that Romania would continue to emphasize Turkey's strategic importance within EU councils. He added that the upcoming German EU presidency would help put a spotlight on Black Sea issues, noting that the three incoming EU Presidencies--Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia--had agreed to include Black Sea issues as part of the EU agenda for the next 18 months.

2008 NATO Summit

¶3. (C) Ungureanu also expressed appreciation for US support for Romania's bid to host the 2008 NATO Summit. He

acknowledged that some soundings showed a majority of alliance members were leaning towards Portugal's rival bid, but evinced doubt about the reliability of these soundings, arguing that a majority of countries were still undecided. He said many smaller nations were likely to follow the lead of the larger ones and that Romania had "not lost hope" that it would host the Summit. In a veiled dig at the NATO SYG, Ungureanu hinted that de Hoop Scheffer was "playing the European card" in his campaign for a second term as SYG. Ungureanu also argued that there were lots of reasons why the summit should be held in Romania, including the fact that Lisbon would have its hands full with the EU Presidency in 2008. The preponderance of issues expected to surface in 2008--enlargement, Black Sea matters, the Western Balkans, the status of Ukraine and Georgia, and energy security matters--all argued for hosting the summit in the region. Ambassador noted that he would be in Washington soon and would pursue the matter there.

Kosovo

14. (C) Ungureanu was less forthcoming on Kosovo, responding to the Ambassador's points by stating that Romania had consistently taken a "principled position" that focussed on the territorial integrity of Serbia and the inviolability of borders. He argued that these principles were enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, and that Kosovar independence or the alteration of Serbia's borders could result in "mayhem." He added that Spain, Greece, and Slovakia shared the Romanian position in opposing Kosovar independence. He said that he preferred a "gradual" change in Kosovo's status rather than an abrupt one, noting that Kosovo was not simply a transatlantic matter but a global issue, given that both UNSC Permreps Russia and China needed to be taken into account.

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Ungureanu also rejected Ambassador's assertion that Kosovo was not a precedent for other regions, arguing that Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and other frozen conflicts would inevitably be affected by the Kosovo status issue. Ungureanu added that "with full respect" for the USG position, Romania would continue to air its "caveats" on the issue. In closing, he said that despite its position on the issue, Romania would not threaten EU solidarity on the issue, and would ultimately vote with the EU majority.

Romanian-Moldovan Relations

15. (C) The Ambassador's reference to apparent growing friction in Romania's relations with Moldova provoked an edgy rebuttal from Ungureanu. The Foreign Minister bemoaned Chisinau's linking progress on bilateral relations to the signing of a Basic Treaty and a bilateral Border Treaty. He said that Bucharest rejected the idea of concluding a Basic Treaty because it "didn't reflect the nature" of current bilateral relations, adding that Moldovan demands including recognition that there was a Moldovan language different from the Romanian language were "Soviet nonsense." Ungureanu said that Voronin had "come to a bilateral summit prepared to give us headaches" and hinted that he had been "set up" to do this by Putin and Lavrov. A suggestion from the Ambassador for a visit by Ambassador Kirby elicited a skeptical response from Ungureanu, who said, "don't look for problems here, it's not a problem of information; the problem is with Chisinau, not here." Ungureanu insisted that Romania was interested in helping Moldova "with no arrogance whatsoever" and that friendly Romanian signals had resulted in "having the door slammed in our face."

16. (C) Comment: This was not the most constructive meeting we have had with the Romanian FM. His handling of the Kosovo equation was predictable, but not particularly helpful. Ungureanu's prickliness on Moldova was actually at odds with how the bulk of our interlocutors handle this subject with

us. It surely reflected the fact that it has not been smooth sailing between Bucharest and Chisinau since this summer. Ungureanu sounded especially bitter over what he described as Chisinau's campaign in European capitals to slander Bucharest. "I am confident," the FM stressed, "we are not devils, and they are not angels." Over coffee the following day, State Secretary Adrian Vieritsa urged us not to read too much into Ungureanu's edgy approach, noting that the Foreign Minister is from Iasi (the capital of the Romanian region of Moldova) and may feel more frustrated than many about Chisinau's latest turn eastward.

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